

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES, Room 522-S, at 9:10 a.m. on January 12, 2000

The second portion of the audit (Federal Mandates and Organizational Structure)([Attachment 2](#)) was completed in August of 1999. This portion of the audit asked “What Will it Cost to Meet FCC Requirements Regarding Wireless Telephones, and What Options Exist for Recovering Those Costs?”

The FCC has issued regulations promoting Enhanced 911 services for people who call 911 on wireless phones. At present, when someone calls 911 from a wireless phone, the answering point receiving the call has no way to know the person’s phone number or location. New FCC regulations will correct this situation in a two-phase process. Phase I requires wireless phone companies to provide, within six months of being asked to do so, the answering point with the caller’s phone number and the phone number of the communication tower that received the signal. Phase II requires wireless companies (by October 1, 2001) to provide the caller’s location, in latitude and longitude, within 125 meters. In both cases the wireless companies must provide the information only if the answering point requests it and is capable of receiving the information transmitted.

The costs of implementing both Phases will depend on the equipment currently in use and on the choices made in trying to meet the FCC’s requirements. There are competing technologies for addressing the Phase I requirements and industry reports show that each option could have different costs for each answering point, local phone company and wireless phone company. Additionally, the strategy each one chooses for Phase I can affect the subsequent cost of implementing Phase II.

There have not been any cost estimates compiled to determine what it might cost Kansas taxpayers to provide Enhanced 911 for wireless phone users. None of the counties had a clear idea of how the requirements would be implemented or of how much they would cost.

There are currently two methods to provide the information for Phase II in providing the caller’s location. Those methods are: Triangulation and Global Positioning Satellites (GPS). Costs for either of these methods are unknown.

Although the FCC didn’t mandate a particular method for recovering the costs of providing Enhanced 911 service to wireless users, other states have imposed a tax on those users. Of the 30 states that have developed such a system, all have imposed a tax on wireless phone users - 21 of whom have a uniform statewide tax.

The post audit committee recommended that the appropriate legislative body might explore the possibility of creating a resource in the form of an advisory committee or task force to work with people from public safety, the wireless industry, the local phone companies, the state phone people and emergency services. The committee or task force could discuss, among other relevant topics, what is needed, how it can be done, does wireless need statewide oversight and what the statutory limitations are on how 911 money can be spent.

Ms. Lash responded to questions from Rep. Dahl, Rep. Sloan, Rep. Holmes, and Rep. McClure.

Chairman Holmes asked if the wireless people would be interested in providing information to the committee tomorrow about towers, triangulation and GPS.

Chairman Holmes reminded the committee to bring forward committee bill requests tomorrow. He also stated he had spoken with the House Education Committee Chairman and plans were in the works to meet jointly during the third week of the session.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 13, 2000 at 9 a.m.